

THE BEACON



Nebraska Emergency Management Agency

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OCTOBER 2004



NATIONAL PREPAREDNESS MONTH KICKS OFF SEPT 9th

Governor Signs Proclamation, Decontamination Trailers Delivered

Thursday, September 9th was the day earmarked for official activities launching "National Preparedness Month", both in Nebraska and nationwide.

Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge presided over the events at the United States Capitol on that day. In Nebraska, the launch took place at the Nebraska National Guard airbase, as Governor Mike Johanns, Lt. Governor Dave Heineman and representatives of emergency management and first responder agencies from around the state gathered to kick off the month designated for emergency preparedness awareness.



Governor Mike Johanns addresses attendees and the media at the September 9 ceremony to proclaim "National Preparedness Month".



As part of the event, the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency turned over 29 decontamination trailers to local jurisdictions. The trailers were purchased with Department of Homeland Security 2002 equipment grant funds, and will provide needed capabilities to local jurisdictions across the state of Nebraska.

The trailers were constructed and equipped by HAZMAT DQE of Indianapolis. A company representative was on hand September 9th to conduct a training session for the emergency management and first responder personnel who arrived to take delivery of the equipment.

Each trailer contains protective gear for emergency personnel and decontamination showers for use in treating victims in hazardous materials incidents.

MODULAR EMERGENCY RESPONSE RADIOLOGICAL TRANSPORTATION TRAINING (MERRTT) COURSE SET FOR OCTOBER

The Modular Response Radiological Transportation Training (MERTT) Train-The-Trainer (TTT) will be held tuesday, October 19 through Wednesday, October 20 2004. The class is full, with 30 attendees signed up.

If funds are available, another course may be set for March of 2005. Enrollment will be open on a priority basis to those counties along the I-80 corridor, and those counties along or adjacent to State Highway 2. Counties that have radiological rail shipments on Union Pacific lines will be next on the priority list, followed by those counties with irradiator facilities, and finally those counties not along the corridor but which could use the training.

The location for the session is the Midtown Holiday Inn at 2503 South Locust Street in Grand Island. Class times will be daily from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

The course covers 18 modules, including DOE Shipments & Resources; Radiological Basics; Biological Effects; Hazard Recognition; Initial Response Actions; Radioactive Materials Shipping Package; Patient Handling; Radiological Terminology and Units; Incident Control; Radiological Survey Instruments and Dosimetry Devices; Assessing Package Integrity; Waste Isolation Pilot Plant; Decontamination, Disposal and Documentation; Transportation by Rail; Transportation of Safeguards Material; Pre-Hospital Practices; Incident Command; and Public Information Officer.

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS, GAME & PARKS COMMISSION HOLD JOINT EXERCISE

Terrorist Scenario Tests Plans and Procedures Over Wide Area

Representatives of the Nebraska Department of Roads and the Nebraska Game and Parks Department recently joined the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency at N.E.M.A.'s Emergency Operations Center to test response and logistics issues in response to a terrorist incident.

The exercise, conducted September 22nd, was facilitated by ICS, a consulting agency that N.E.M.A. has retained to assist in training and exercising operations in the state.

In an exercise covering multiple NDOR districts, the agencies got a close look at the logistics involved in moving heavy equipment and evacuating facilities. The Lexington and Kearney Department of Roads yards were evacuated, and approximately 250 people were involved in the exercise.

Game and Parks Commission personnel also shuffled equipment and tested warning and evacuation procedures.

"We have more enthusiasm for Homeland Security at the Department of Roads than we ever thought we'd see," said Jim Schmailzl, Operations & Maintenance Section Manager. "The locals all want to do exercises now."

Dana Miller, with Game and Parks, said "Our people, too, got excited. It's going to turn into a monster, trying to feed these people with exercises. It did exactly what we hoped it would do."



The calls were flying hot and heavy during the exercise, as more than 190 messages were sent in a six-hour period. Wes Loos, of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission (foreground) and Mike Mattison with the Nebraska Department of Roads try to keep up with the information flow generated in the field.

"People started having fun," said Schmailzl. "About an hour into the exercise, the simulators began to sound like telemarketers."

There were real-world challenges during the exercise, too. Incidents that NDOR had to deal with while the exercise went on included a truck turn-over on Interstate 80, the discovery of cans of toxic material on a bridge over the interstate, and a truck that lost an axle in traffic.

EVENTS AND REMINDERS

Cherry County Exercise Scheduled for October 6th --

Cherry County has scheduled a tabletop exercise for Wednesday, October 6th, to include approximately 50 participants. The scenario is that of a terrorist bombing incident.

Ft. Calhoun Exercise Scheduled for October 26th --

A non-evaluated exercise is set for the Ft. Calhoun Station on Tuesday, October 26th.

Cooper Exercises Set for October 13th and October 27th --

Exercises are scheduled for the Cooper Nuclear Station on October 13th and October 27th, 2004. These exercises will not involve the State EOC.

BRYAN COOK JOINS N.E.M.A. AS REP PLANNER

The newest addition to the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff is a Nebraska native returning home. Bryan Cook, originally of Lincoln, has accepted the Cooper REP Planner position vacated by Dennis Colsden.

Bryan will be moving his family back to Lincoln from Cincinnati, OH, where he has been employed the past four years as Operations Manager for PowerNet Global Communications, a broad-spectrum communications provider located just north of Cincinnati. Bryan's wife, Gwen and their two daughters Hannah and Michaela will be coming to join him in Lincoln as soon as their house in Ohio can be sold.

Before his employment with PowerNet Global, Bryan spent seven years as an Army Ranger, with postings at a number of bases stateside and deployments to action in Panama and Desert Storm. Both Bryan and his wife have medical leanings. Bryan is a paramedic and Gwen is a Registered Nurse, currently with the Cancer Unit at Jewish Hospital in Cincinnati.



Outside of work hours, Bryan and his family enjoy outdoor activities, including camping, running and bicycling. The relocation to Lincoln will be a homecoming for both Bryan and Gwen, as Bryan is from Lincoln – with four sisters and his parents in town – and Gwen is from Omaha.

GRANT NEWS

DEPARTMENT OF HOMELAND SECURITY ANNOUNCES \$1.4 MILLION COMPETITIVE GRANT AWARDED TO TELECOMMUNICATIONS FOR THE DEAF

(Washington, DC) Sept. 29, 2004 - The U.S. Department of Homeland Security announced today that the Telecommunications for the Deaf Incorporated (TDI) has been awarded a \$1.4 million Competitive Training Grant to develop a network that will provide information on disaster preparedness and homeland security to individuals with hearing disabilities.

The DHS Competitive Training Grants Program provides funding for training initiatives to further the Department's mission of preparing the nation in the event of a terrorist incident. TDI completed a rigorous application process for this grant—over 217 applications were received and the Department selected 14 programs for funding, totaling \$33,645,997 to be awarded.

"The issues that people with hearing disabilities face in preparing for natural and man-made disasters are unique and complex," said Daniel W. Sutherland, the Department's Officer for Civil Rights and Civil Liberties. "Working with partners such as TDI, we can rest assured that innovative and effective solutions to these complex problems will emerge."

On July 22, 2004, President Bush issued an Executive Order creating an Interagency Coordinating Council on Emergency Preparedness and Individuals with Disabilities. Today's grant announcement follows the first official meeting of the Council hosted by the Department of Homeland Security last week.

TDI intends to work with a consortium of local and regional disability consumer organizations. Through this grant program, the project directors in each of the offices will provide numerous workshops in and around their region. In addition, an online information resource will be developed to provide information nationally to this special needs population.

Through this grant, TDI will partner with agencies across the country including: Developmental Evaluation and Adjustment Facilities, Inc., Allston, Massachusetts; Northern Virginia Resource Center for Deaf and Hard of Hearing Persons, Inc., Fairfax, Virginia; Communication Service for the Deaf, Sioux Falls, South Dakota; and Deaf Counseling, Advocacy, and Referral Agency, San Leandro, California

METROPOLITAN MEDICAL RESPONSE SYSTEM GRANT AWARDS FOR FY 2004 ANNOUNCED

(Washington, DC) Sept. 30, 2004 - The Department of Homeland Security today awarded more than \$46 million in Metropolitan Medical Response System (MMRS) grants for Fiscal Year 2004. The 110 grants reach 114 MMRS jurisdictions throughout the United States.

"The MMRS grants provide the awardees with major funding to further enhance and maintain integrated, systematic preparedness for local response to weapons of mass destruction high-casualty events until significant external assistance arrives," said Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge. "This funding permits jurisdictions to focus on being prepared for terrorist events that involve radiological, nuclear, chemical, biological or explosive agents as well as epidemic disease outbreaks, large scale hazardous materials accidents and major natural disasters."

The MMRS program originated in the Department of Health and Human Services in 1996 and transferred to the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in March 2003. As part of Homeland Security's "one-stop-shop" grant coordination, Homeland Security's Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness (SLGCP) will assume responsibility for MMRS in October 2004. The awards committee noted that the grant applications, in addition to incorporating MMRS program goals and objectives, reflected progress in addressing National Incident Management System compliance, interoperable communications, enhanced mutual aid and regional expansion. The 16 selected Special Project applications represent a variety of innovative and exportable initiatives.

MMRS FY04 grants are awarded in three categories:

- Capability Focus Areas (\$250,000/jurisdiction). Prepares localities to respond to new threats posed by WMD events such as the detonation of a dirty bomb. All MMRS jurisdictions are eligible to receive Capability Focus Grants if they applied for them.
- Sustainment (additional \$150,000/jurisdiction). Covers the planning, training and equipment needed to maintain a locality's capability to respond to the human health needs of community members impacted by a mass casualty incident. MMRS jurisdictions that completed the program's baseline capabilities are eligible to receive Sustainment Grants if they applied for them.
- Special Project Awards (funding amounts from \$25,000 - \$640,000). Recognizes jurisdictions that develop innovative solutions to local problems and publicize their applicability to localities across the nation.

RED WILLOW COUNTY HOSTAGE EXERCISE HIGHLIGHTS MULTI-AGENCY COOPERATION

The McCook Police Department, the Red Willow County Sheriff's Department, the Nebraska State Patrol SWAT team, the NSP Bomb Squad, the McCook Fire Department, surrounding mutual aid first responders, and Red Willow and McCook Emergency Management all played nicely with one another. That's a good thing, with a school building full of children and explosives in the picture.

The scenario was a tense one, with two hostage-takers barricaded in Central Elementary School, holding deadman switches connected to vests full of dynamite. Even though it was a well-publicized exercise, tension ran high.

Also involved were the Nebraska Emergency Management Agency, McCook Public Works, NSP

hostage negotiators,

McCook Public Schools, the McCook Public Information Officer and the Nebraska Department of Corrections. The exercise ran in real time, and highlighted the long stretches of watchful waiting while hostage negotiators worked their magic. While the confrontation played out in the front of the school, the Nebraska State Patrol bomb robot



With a pocketful of dynamite, NEMA's Dave Reisen makes his demands known from a school building filled with smoke.



Almost over. Bad Guy #1 gives up, as NEMA ETO Eric Plautz backs up carefully as directed by SWAT.

investigated and dismantled a package planted by the bad guys on the far side of the block. Echoing explosions, screaming sirens and swarming law enforcement officers prompted numerous calls to the local 911 Center from that portion of the citizenry who had been unaware of, or chose to ignore, the extensive prior publicity advising the community of the upcoming event.

At the end of the day the lowlifes had been talked into surrendering, the children were all set free, the moulage had been cleaned away, and enough insight had been gained to provide local responders and emergency management personnel with plenty of work to keep them busy for quite some time to come. Although the exercise showed a very encouraging picture of competence and cooperation, it also pointed out those areas that can use some work. With any luck, the lessons learned will never need to be put into real-world practice.



MERV, the State Patrol bomb robot, does its thing with a mock IED.

LEDRS CONFERENCE EXPLORES LIVESTOCK ISSUES

The LEDRS (Livestock Emergency Response System) Annual Conference was held in Kearney July 28-29, 2004, exploring high-visibility issues in the agriculture industry. Topics included Evidentiary Procedures/Reporting, Toxicity in Livestock Feeds, the National Animal Health Emergency Response Corps, and Working With Media.

Representatives were in attendance from local, state and federal agencies. Speakers for the conference included: Dr. Kathy Connell, Washington State Veterinarian; Dr. Bret March, Indiana State Veterinarian; Dr. Bob Hillman, Texas State Veterinarian; Sgt. Randy Morehead, Nebraska State Patrol; Scott Lackas, Nebraska State Patrol; and Ken Jackson, Nebraska Bureau of Plant Industry.

Nebraska Emergency Management Agency staff members Tonya Smith, Eric Seberg, Nate Swanson and Sara Hartzell assisted Nebraska State Veterinarian Dr. Larry Williams with a tabletop exercise involving a possible outbreak of a Foreign Animal Disease.

CORRECTIONS EXERCISES FOR DOMESTIC TERRORISM

The Nebraska Department of Correctional Services recently conducted a full-scale domestic terrorism exercise at the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women in York, Nebraska. The exercise took place in the new expansion area and was six hours in duration. It involved an explosion, mass casualties and a hostage situation.

The exercise was developed by the Nebraska Correctional Center for Women's Exercise Planning Team, and was funded in part by Office of Domestic Preparedness Homeland Security Exercise Grant funds.

The Nebraska Emergency Management Agency Exercise and Training Division provided additional controllers and safety officers for the exercise so that institution staff could function in their occupational roles during the exercise.

The exercise concluded with an after-action conference, highlighting lessons learned and resulting in the development of an institutional improvement plan.

State and local agencies involved included the University of Nebraska-Kearney, the Nebraska State Patrol, the York Fire Department, the York Police, the York County Sheriff, the American Red Cross and the York General Hospital.



NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS HOSTS APPRECIATION DAY



Management serves the workers today.

On Thursday, September 2, the Nebraska Department of Roads held its Employee Appreciation Day for employees in the Central Headquarters. NEMA deployed the Mobile State Command Post to exhibit. Appreciation Day also featured exhibits of new department equipment, vendor displays, an employee car show and division information booths where employees could change benefit elections, get their blood pressure checked, visit with the Safety Team and so on. A lunch of hamburgers and hot dogs was served by the department leadership.



WINTER WEATHER AWARENESS DAY SET FOR OCTOBER 27

This year the National Weather Service has scheduled October 27 as Winter Weather Awareness Day. This is a departure from previous years when a Winter Weather Awareness Week has been designated.

Governor Mike Johanns is expected to sign a proclamation declaring October 27th to be Winter Weather Awareness Day. This occasion will offer all local jurisdictions the opportunity to prepare their citizens for the rigors of another Nebraska winter. It will also offer emergency management in Nebraska an opportunity to publicize the special considerations surrounding winter weather in the state.



28 DEPLOY FROM NEBRASKA FOR FLORIDA HURRICANE SUPPORT

The call went out in early September for volunteers to deploy to Florida, and Nebraska answered the call. Twenty-eight Nebraskans headed for Atlanta for training and assignment with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

The call went out on September 4th for 1,000 volunteers nationwide who could commit to a two-week deployment. By September 8th a total of 2,142 volunteers had been mobilized, and the callup was terminated. At that point there were an additional 641 names on a standby list.

On September 15th a second callup was announced, this time for 400 volunteers who could commit to a four- to six-week deployment. That request was subsequently bumped to a desired level of 500 volunteers, and by September 17th FEMA had announced a hold on volunteer solicitations, as they had exceeded that level of 500 deployments with a grand total of 595.

Between the two deployments, Nebraska contributed 28 volunteers, some of whom are still on the job as of the first of October. Twenty-one went from Nebraska in the first two-week phase, and seven were deployed for the four- to six-week duty cycle. There were a total of more than 2,600 volunteers mobilized nationally.

In comments on the FEMA website, the agency said: This first-ever nationwide activation of Citizen Corps members expands the mission of Citizen Corps from a locally based program to a national resource. By tapping Citizen Corps members who have received first aid or disaster response training and who volunteer in their communities, the state and federal response system has an additional resource for large-scale disasters.

"Citizen Corps Councils across the country have been working hard to educate and train citizens in emergency preparedness and response skills and to engage citizens in supporting emergency services within their community. We at the Department of Homeland Security are proud to see so many local Citizen Corps participants responding so enthusiastically to the need for help in Florida," said C. Suzanne Mencer, Executive Director of the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness. "Citizens across America play an important role in making our communities safer and better prepared, and they are a critical resource in responding to events like this - the work of Citizen Corps is definitely paying off."

NEW CITIZEN CORPS COORDINATOR NAMED AT VOLUNTEER SERVICES COMMISSION

Susan Burton joins our Statewide efforts in Emergency Management as the Citizen Corps Coordinator at the Nebraska Volunteer Service Commission. A native Nebraskan, Susan graduated from the University of Nebraska-Kearney in 1995 with a BA in International Studies, and from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2000 with an MA in Human Geography. She has had the opportunity to travel to 14 countries for educational and volunteer experience. Working as a geography instructor - as Associate Director at Lincoln's Asian Community and Cultural Center - and within the development department of The Salvation Army in San Diego during last year's devastating wildfires, has given her experience with diverse communities and individuals during times of crisis and times of goal setting and planning for success. She is looking forward to "adding value" to the local efforts of emergency responders by helping coordinate the development of citizen corps councils and providing program support to existing councils. Please do not hesitate to contact Susan via email with ideas or questions about Citizen Corps initiatives. Her e-mail is Susan_Burton@hhss.ne.us

ADAMS COUNTY CONDUCTS MASS VACCINATION CLINIC TABLETOP

On August 17, Adams County tested their plan for mass vaccinations in response to a large-scale disease outbreak.

The Table Top Exercise evaluated the Mass Vaccination Clinic plans, and involved 32 players from law enforcement, fire, health departments, hospital staff, emergency managers, media, funeral directors, state agencies and clinic facility directors.

The scenario involved the detection of a disease in the South Heartland District, which quickly rose to epidemic proportions. The exercise was designed by the Adams County Exercise Design Team, with Michele Bever from the South Heartland District Health Department as Exercise Director.



Mass Vaccination Exercise players work out their taskings.

FROM THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR...

1 October 2004

TO: Emergency Management Directors/Coordinators

FROM: Al Berndt

RE: EMPG Program Changes



NEMA continues to be actively involved with emergency management/homeland security issues within the State of Nebraska. We have just closed out the FY2004 fiscal year for the EMPG program and are in anticipation of the changes that are being instituted as a result of transferring the program from FEMA to the Office of State and Local Coordination. There appears to be a very good chance for expanded funding coming out of the House/Senate conference committee on the DHS budget for the EMPG program and we are in anticipation of being able to expand the program to additional counties.

The start of the new Federal fiscal year finds NEMA again operating under a continuing resolution at the State level. The funding for NEMA and the EMPG is caught up in conference committee that is a part of and affecting the entire package of homeland security funds. In past years, funds have been distributed to the States using a formula that gave a base allocation and then percentage based upon State population. Under various funding amendments proposed with both the House and the Senate under the guise of "faster and smarter" funding for homeland security, there are currently proposals to keep the allocation formula, base it solely upon critical infrastructure identified within each State and on a combination of formula grants and critical infrastructure. While the total amount of funding proposed is not known at this time and the distribution formula not set, I personally do not think we as a State will see our FY2005 allocation as high as it was in FY2004.

With the issuance of Homeland Security Presidential Directive's 5 and 8, much more emphasis will be placed upon the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and the National Preparedness Goal. These initiatives will have a profound influence on how we do business at the State and local level and will influence all of our planning, exercising and training scenarios. The November 16th and 17th homeland security meetings being held in Kearney will very deliberately lay out the requirements for participating in the State emergency management/homeland security program starting this year and into the foreseeable future. It is imperative each County director plan on attending and having a representative of their County Board with them. It is through your participation and support at the Board level, decisions will be able to be made that allow your County to integrate into and support the program at the appropriate level.

Filmstrip

Scenes from the Exercises

